



Douglas M. Duncan  
County Executive

# CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
**PERMITTING SERVICES**

January 2003



Robert C. Hubbard  
Director



Observing soil pit are (left to right): Dean Packard, PE., P.G. Associates; Carl Robinette, Soil Scientist NRCS; and Jay Beatty, Manager, Wells & Septic Unit

## **WELL AND SEPTIC WORKS WITH STATE SOIL SCIENTIST AND DEVELOPER TO SOLVE DIFFICULT SOIL PROBLEM**

Each year, Well and Septic field inspectors conduct water-table tests on existing unimproved properties and proposed subdivision lots to determine the suitability for on-site sewage disposal. Accurate determination of the seasonal (spring-time) high-water-table level is a crucial part of the overall percolation-test procedure.

Last year's severe drought made water-table evaluations more difficult because in many cases, typical "perched" (shallow) springtime water-table levels were not observable. Inspectors are being trained to spot certain soil colors that are indicators of previously saturated soil zones. In many cases, these so called "mottled" soil colors can take the place of actual water-table observations.

One particular subdivision presented a perplexing dilemma. The color of the soil's parent material (rock that weathers to make soil) actually mimicked the color of typical saturated (mottled) soils. This meant that it was very difficult to distinguish between colors imparted by saturated soil conditions and colors imparted by the underlying rock. The inspector's initial determination, taking a conservative approach and setting the high-water level at the level of the "mottles," meant that the developer was unlikely to gain percolation-test approval for several of his proposed lots.

To obtain an impartial third-party opinion to resolve this matter, the developer and the Well & Septic staff decided to obtain the services of a State Soils Scientist from the National Resources Conservation Service (“NRCS”). These scientists are soil experts who typically assist farmers with difficult soil problems.

On June 12, 2002, Soil Scientist Carl Robinnette, considered the state’s leading expert on soil colors as they relate to saturated conditions, evaluated the soil in the subdivision. Also present at the evaluation were the developer, Brad Bernstein of Bernstein Construction, and his engineer, Dean Packard of P.G. Associates; project excavators James Reise and Gary Menso; Wells & Septic Permitting Services Manager Jay Beatty; Permitting Services Specialist Gene von Gunten; and Environmental Health Specialists (inspectors) Kimberly Clark, Andy Celmer, Amy Hart, and Marcie Schubert.

Mr. Reise dug a total of four test pits on the lots in question for Mr. Robinnette to examine. Mr. Robinnette provided what turned out to be a thorough training session on the differences between soil colors imparted by the parent material and those imparted by saturation. His evaluation allowed percolation testing to go forward to assure that the septic systems were environmentally sound and could be installed and could be installed at the highest possible lot yield for the subdivision per lot.

The value of the Mr. Robinnette’s evaluation extended well beyond the resolution of septic-system installation in the subdivision. DPS personnel gained a better understanding of how to make accurate water-table determinations in unusual agronomical situations. The developer and his associates

gained a new appreciation for the complex nature of soils and the importance of properly applying scientific protocols in septic-system installation.

All those who participated appreciate the gracious assistance of Mr. Carl Robinnette and the NRCS Office of the State Soil Scientists.



**AS I SEE IT ...**  
**by DPS DIRECTOR**  
**ROBERT HUBBARD**

It was with great pride that I accepted an invitation to be a presenter at the annual meeting of the National Conference of States on Building Code Standards (“NCSBCS”) in Louisville, Kentucky in October of this year.

With attendees from a number of jurisdictions, including the state of Oregon and the cities of Los Angeles and San Jose, California, I participated in a panel discussion of how automation can improve the permit process. I am pleased to report that Montgomery County is in the forefront of using automation to streamline service delivery. Only a handful of communities offer automated services, such as internet-based permit-application status checks and inspection scheduling, currently available in DPS. We are proceeding with further enhancements

to our automation system that will culminate in on-line application submittal.

Last month, I had the opportunity to attend the first annual Green Building Conference and Expo in Austin, Texas. If you are not familiar with “green” or “sustainable” buildings, dust off your Birkenstocks, and prepare yourself for the next wave of enlightenment.

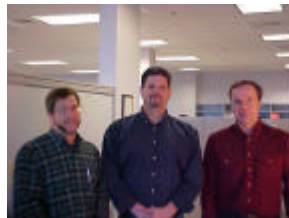
Environmentally sensitive consumers and image-conscious corporations are demanding green building technology, such as the “living-roof” technology featured in an earlier issue of this newsletter. Initial construction costs are higher, but are usually offset by reduced operating costs, long-term savings to the property owner, and protection of the environment. Builders, designers and owners may choose to have their buildings evaluated and certified as green buildings utilizing a voluntary set of rules entitled “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design” (“LEED”). The LEED standards evaluate building design, construction, and performance based on points awarded in such categories as energy efficiency, site-impact minimization, materials-reuse, water conservation, and stormwater management.

The conference gave me a valuable insight into the work that the National Association of Home Builders has done to promote green construction practices and the efforts of a number of volume builders; notably, Centex Homes, Pulte, and D. R. Horton; to design homes to the new green standards.

In this day and age, it’s hard to argue against reduced reliance on foreign energy, reducing or eliminating greenhouse gases, and saving the Chesapeake Bay, all prospective benefits of “green consciousness.” Stay tuned for more information on this topic.

## LAND DEVELOPMENT

### RECENT TRANSFERS



Pictured from left: Jerry Oden, Tom Weadon, and Danny Ratliff

Over the years, DPS has successfully filled a number of its engineering positions through the transfer and promotion of inspectors. These “internal hires” have provided upward mobility for our employees and allowed us to take advantage of their substantial knowledge and experience at a new level of responsibility in the organization.

We are pleased to announce that Permitting Services Inspector Tom Weadon transferred to the Water Resources Plan Review Section as a Permitting Services Specialist effective December 1, 2002. He reports to Permitting Services Manager Rick Brush. Tom has worked as a sediment-control inspector in DPS since 1995.

Congratulations are due also to Permitting Services Specialist Danny Ratliff and Permitting Services Inspector Jerry Oden who transferred to the Subdivision Plan Review Section as Permitting Services Specialists on August 25, 2002. Danny has worked many years in the subdivision field, both in DPS and DPWT. Jerry has considerable experience in sediment control, both in DPS and in DEP. The employees are supervised by Permitting Services Manager Joe Cheung.

Please join us in wishing these employees success in their new careers.

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT EMPLOYEES ACHIEVE CERTIFICATION**

The following Permitting Services Specialists II recently became Certified Professionals in Erosion and Sediment Control ("CPESC's"):

Bill Campbell  
Mark Etheridge  
Leo Galanko  
Richard Gee  
Mike Geier  
David Kuykendall  
Blair Lough  
Ellen Rader

The certification involves passing a peer review of credentials by a certification-review committee, scoring 70% or higher on a proctored exam, and subscribing to the Code of Ethics of the CPESC Council.

The certification has become a requirement for design professionals in many communities nationwide, most notably on the West Coast. The highest score nationwide since initiation of the examination requirement is 90%. Leo Galanko scored an 86% on the exam.

By virtue of their certifications, the employees are now eligible for promotion to Senior Permitting Services Specialist.

Congratulations, everyone!



## **CASEWORK MANAGEMENT**

### **SIGN AWARDS PROGRAM GETS UNDERWAY**

On October 16, 2002, in conjunction with the "Keep Montgomery County Beautiful" contest sponsored by the Department of Public Works and Transportation ("DPWT"), DPS held its first Sign Awards Program.

The program recognizes business and community organizations and individuals for exemplary work in sign design. The program seeks to heighten awareness of excellence in sign design and to improve signage generally by promoting positive designs. Program criteria are as follows:

#### **AWARD CATEGORIES**

Retail and commercial entities (smaller in size than shopping centers and building complexes)

Shopping centers and building complexes

Sign-concept plans

Signs in residential zones (includes community-identification signs, churches, non-profit organizations, professional/home occupations, subdivision entrance signs)

#### **AWARD CRITERIA**

Each submission is evaluated as to:

Whether or not the sign enhances the community

How innovatively the sign meets the requirements of the sign ordinance and other applicable codes

How esthetically pleasing the design is

How effectively the sign communicates its text



## APPLICATION PACKAGE FOR SIGN AWARD

To be eligible, a sign must be lawful and located in Montgomery County at the time of application. The applicant must submit the following documents:

Application for Sign Award Nomination

One copy of brochure or scale drawing of sign

One picture/photograph of sign at its existing location

For free-standing signs: One site plan showing location of sign on property and distance from property lines noted

For signs on buildings:

One copy of building elevation drawing showing sign

All application packages must be received by the Department of Permitting Services by June 15th of the award year.

No entry fee is required.

Application packages will not be returned and may be used by contest sponsors in future promotions.

Sign-award applications may be submitted by anyone, except for members of the Keep Montgomery County Beautiful Task Force and sign-award judges and their families.

There is no limit to the number of applications that may be submitted by any one nominee.

DPS reviews each application to ensure that the sign complies with all applicable codes and regulations.

## SELECTION PROCESS

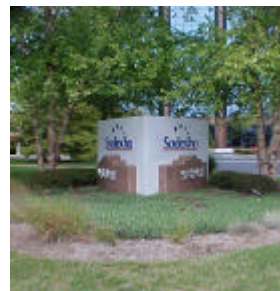
DPS sign volunteers review the applications, conduct site visits, and select signs for final consideration by the panel of judges (one representative from one Sign Review Board, one representative from DPWT, one representative from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and one representative from each of the five Government Service Centers).

For Further Information about the Sign Award Program, contact DPS Permit Technician Laura Granger at 240 777-6243. If you decide to file an application, mail it to Ms. Granger at the Department of Permitting Services, 255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850.

This year's sign-award winners are:



Hickok-Warner-Fox Architects for  
“WesTech Business Park”



Lockwood Sign Group for “Sodexo”  
Monument Sign



Donovan-Feola-Balderson & Assoc., Inc., for “The Elms at Kingsview Village”



Town of Kensington for “Town of Kensington Kiosk”



### **CASEWORK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Two Permit Technicians (pictured) in the Electrical, Licensing, & Zoning Section recently received recognition for their efforts.

Tom Carlin received an “Outstanding Idea” certificate for making a suggestion regarding the operations of the Water Resources

Team. To notify Team members to come to the front counter, Tom suggested using, instead of desk phones, a radio currently used by the Team exclusively for contacting inspectors. The use of the radio should improve response time for walk-in customers.

Karen Stephenson received recognition for her superior performance during her first week at the front counter. The front counter can be one of the most stressful places to work in DPS. Lines can develop within minutes, and staff must be able to respond to customer questions about a wide range of topics. Karen entered applications without errors and handled her customers in an informative and courteous manner.

Congratulations, Tom and Karen, and keep up the good work!

### **AED DEDICATED TO 255 ROCKVILLE PIKE**

The Division of Fire Code Enforcement (“DFCE”) of the Department of Fire and Rescue Services has purchased an automatic external defibrillator (“AED”) for use in the event of a cardiac emergency on the second floor of the Metro Center. The acquisition of this device significantly enhances the emergency services available to employees and visitors in the building.

The “Life Pak 500” was specifically chosen for its quick-deployment capability and ease of use. It is compatible with cardiac monitors and defibrillators in use on Mobile Intensive Care Units throughout Montgomery County. The device augments an existing complement of basic-life-support first-aid equipment, airway-maintenance supplies, and oxygen equipment available in DFCE.

Cardiovascular disease is the nation's number-one killer. As many as 350,000 people per year die from sudden cardiac arrest. The leading cause of death is sudden erratic heartbeats known as ventricular fibrillations. The AED recognizes this erratic rhythm and corrects it by delivering an electric shock to the heart.

The American Medical Association, the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross agree that rapid intervention as a first response, followed by transport by an advanced life-support ambulance to a hospital and follow-up hospital care, can save many lives. They recommend placing automatic external defibrillators in public venues such as airports, stadiums, bus terminals, and shopping malls and in commercial aircraft.

For further information on this subject, contact the following websites:

<http://www.ama-assn.org/>

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200000>

<http://www.redcross.org/>



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### **ANNAPOLIS PERMITS CHIEF VISITS DPS**

On October 11, 2002, Michael Mallinoff, Acting Chief of the Bureau of Inspections & Permits for the City of Annapolis, met with DPS Director Robert Hubbard and departmental managers to familiarize himself with the structure and operations of DPS. He received an organizational overview and an explanation of the job classifications created as a result of the DPS reorganization. He also saw a demonstration of the automated permitting system. Mr. Mallinoff intends to apply what he learned in his visit to the task of re-structuring his organization.





## Department of Permitting Services

### *BULLETIN*

255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor, Rockville, Maryland 20850

# MECHANICAL PERMIT

Effective February 3, 2003, the Department of Permitting Services will begin issuing Mechanical Permits. A mechanical permit is required to install, enlarge, alter, remove, convert, or replace a mechanical heating, ventilating, air-conditioning and refrigeration system, the installation of which is regulated by the International Mechanical Code, International Fuel-Gas Code, or the International Residential Code, as appropriate.

The mechanical permit will be required for buildings for which a building permit is applied for on or after February 3, 2003, and for all equipment replacements after that date.

Building permits for which application has been made before February 3, 2003, do not require a mechanical permit.

For more information, and for help with such questions as,

- When do I need a mechanical permit?
- Who may obtain a mechanical permit?
- What is the minimum permit fee?
- What projects do not require a mechanical permit?
- What is the application process?
- How do I schedule an inspection?

Please visit the County's web site at:

<http://permits.emontgomery.org>

click on "Building Construction,"  
then click on "Mechanical Permit."

For general questions about permitting processes or procedures, please contact Permitting Services Manager Sandra Kaiser, Division of Casework Management, at [sandra.kaiser@co.mo.md.us](mailto:sandra.kaiser@co.mo.md.us) or 240-777-6283.

For additional help on code or inspection questions, please contact Permitting Services Manager Phil Waclawski, Division of Building Construction, at [phil.waclawski@co.mo.md.us](mailto:phil.waclawski@co.mo.md.us) or 240-777-6228.



## **DPS DIRECTOR RECEIVES DIVERSITY AWARD**



DPS Director Robert Hubbard receives Leadership in Diversity Award from AAEA President Marcia Watson.

On Thursday October 10, 2002, DPS Director Robert Hubbard received the African American Employees Association (“AAEA”) Leadership in Diversity Award. He was recognized for his “exemplary leadership in promoting and achieving workforce diversity and equality in Montgomery County.” Hubbard was nominated by minority employees in DPS for supporting activities that further diversity in government, such as the AAEA's Leadership Development Program.

In announcing the award, Hubbard stated: “I want to thank the employees who nominated me, and, I want to thank everyone in the department who shares the vision of our current administration of valuing diversity. I could not have achieved this recognition without your commitment to a diverse workforce.”

## **EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 3, 2003**

**The Department of Permitting Services will no longer accept inspection requests by Fax. Please call 240-777-6210 to schedule or cancel inspections.**

**Thank You**





## NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 3, 2003

**Department of  
Permitting Services**  
255 Rockville Pike, Second Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4166

## DPS MAIN TELEPHONE NUMBER (240) 777-6300

<b>(240) 777-6210</b>	<b>To: Schedule an Inspection Cancel an Inspection Find the status of a permit Receive documents via fax</b>
<b>(240) 777-6259</b>	Complaints
<b>(240) 777-6370</b>	Questions related to residential building permits (new construction, additions, alterations, sheds, decks, fences, swimming pools), commercial building permits, demolition permits, fire-alarm permits, fire-sprinkler permits, Use-and-Occupancy Certificates, and Historic Area Work Permits
<b>(240) 777-6320</b>	Questions related to subdivision development, permits to work in the right-of-way, stormwater-management concepts, sediment-control permits, and well-and-septic permits
<b>(240) 777-6240</b>	Questions related to zoning, setbacks, information, building-height restrictions, special exceptions, electrical permits and licenses, mechanical permits, vendor licenses, sign permits, and Permitting Services records
<b>(240) 777-6260</b>	Division of Casework Management
<b>(240) 777-6350</b>	Division of Land Development
<b>(240) 777-6200</b>	Division of Building Construction
<b>(240) 777-6360</b>	Office of the Director
<b>(240) 777-6256</b>	TTY

## **EMPLOYEES ACHIEVE PROFICIENCY ADVANCEMENTS**

Most DPS employees are assigned to classes of positions that have multiple levels to allow the employees the opportunity for career progression in their occupations. These tiered classes are called “budget-level classes,” because when positions of these classes are created in the department during the budget process, they are created with as many levels as the class dictates.

The principal budget-level classes in DPS are:

Senior Permitting Services Specialist  
Permitting Services Specialist II  
Permitting Services Specialist I

Permitting Services Inspector III  
Permitting Services Inspector II  
Permitting Services Inspector I

Permit Technician III  
Permit Technician II  
Permit Technician I

Promotion from one class level to another in a position is called “proficiency advancement,” because the promotion signifies the employee’s readiness to perform at the higher level of responsibility. Virtually all DPS proficiency advancements at the highest level in a class require some kind of certification.

We are pleased to announce the following proficiency advancements, listed first by employees who completed applicable certifications, with the certifications shown parenthetically:

### Senior Permitting Services Specialist

[(1) Certification by the International Erosion Control Association and the Soils and Water Conservation Society as a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control  
(2) Completion of six Building Officials and Code Administrators International /International Code Council test modules, two of which must be plan-review related  
(3) Registration as a State of Maryland Environmental Sanitarian and 10 additional credit hours of continuing advanced education in on-site sewage disposal/water-supply systems]

Mark Etheridge (1)  
Leo Galanko (1)  
Tom Gironda (2)  
Wayne Grossman (2)  
Stephen King (2)  
Nam Ngo (2)  
Nadine Piontko (1)  
Harry Sandberg (3)  
Gene vonGunten (3)

### Permitting Services Inspector III

[(1) Certification by the Maryland State Highway Administration as a Technician in the Concrete Field, Soils and Aggregate Compaction, and Hot Mix Asphalt Materials Tester specialties  
(2) Certification by the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies as an Engineering Technician in the Erosion and Sediment Control Program at Level I]

Robert Bucklin (1)  
John Burdette (1)  
Roy Carter (1)

Chris Cary (1)  
Adam Curtin (1)  
Geary P. Holley (2)  
Charles Lawson (1)  
John Loevy (1)  
Richard Long (1)  
Upton Reed (1)  
Chris Smith (1)  
Tom Weadon (2)  
Ralph Wolfe (1)

#### Permit Technician III

(Certification by the Building Officials and Code Administrators International as a Certified Permit Technician)

Laura King  
Rebecca Mason  
Helen Smith

#### Permitting Services Inspector II

Mark Beall  
Brian Gregg  
Steve Pullum

#### Permit Technician II

Tommy Carlin  
Yvette Cooper  
Daryl Foreman  
Brett Proctor

#### Principal Administrative Aide

Cherise Smith

#### Management and Budget Specialist III

Maggie Orsini

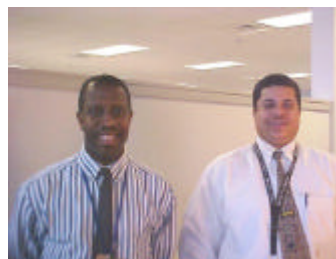
#### Investigator III

Stan Garber

### NEW HIRES



Left to right: Ronald Milberg, Leonard Woods, Bonnie Sabo, Jeffrey Mann, Brian Kim



Left to right: Clayton Butler, and Charles Hicks

DPS has seen a lot of hiring activity over the past six months. We have been very fortunate to have been able to fill our vacancies with a mix of talented people from both inside and outside the County. Brief biographies of our new employees follow below.

Charles Hicks joined DPS on December 9, 2002 as an Information Technology Specialist in the Director's Office. Charles previously worked for AINS as a computer systems engineer and was a vital team member during DPS's migration from Memo to Outlook. Charles has 94 Computer Science credits and is preparing to become a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer. He reports to DPS automation manager Tom Laycock.

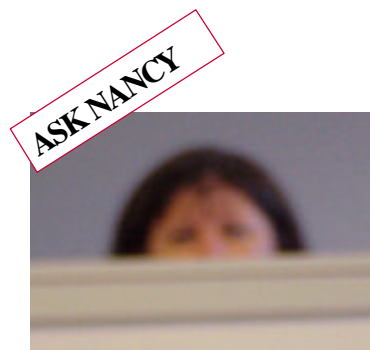
The Sediment Control/Stormwater Inspection Section in the Division of Land Development recently acquired three new Permit-

ting Services Inspectors. Jeffrey Mann and Ronald Milberg joined DPS on November 18, 2002. Jeffrey last worked for Professional Consulting Corporation in Gaithersburg performing geotechnical, hydrogeologic, environmental, and geologic investigations. Jeffrey has a Bachelor's Degree in Earth Science from East Texas State University. Ronald came to us from the Maryland Department of the Environment Water Management Administration as an Environmental Compliance Specialist. Ronald has Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Agronomy from the University of Maryland. Hyungsun (Brian) Kim joined DPS on Monday, November 4, 2002. Prior to joining DPS, Brian worked as a Construction Inspection Project Manager for Kim Engineering, Inc. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Information Systems and Foreign Studies. Jeffrey, Ronald, and Brian report to Permitting Services Manager Mike Reahl.

Bonnie Sabo became a DPS employee on Monday, November 4, 2002, when she started as a Permit Technician in the Division of Casework Management. Bonnie reports to Permitting Services Manager Sandy Kaiser. Bonnie has been with the County since 1998 and has worked for the Montgomery County Council and, most recently, for the Montgomery County Board of Appeals as an Office Services Coordinator.

Clayton Butler arrived in DPS on Monday, July 29, 2002, as a Permit Technician in Casework Management under the supervision of Permitting Services Manager Sandra Batterden. Clayton worked for Facilities and Services in DPWT for almost ten years as an Office Services Coordinator.

Leonard Woods also became a Permit Technician in Casework Management on July 29, 2002. Leonard has a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education and worked for Highway Services in DPWT for almost 18 years. Leonard's supervisor is Permitting Services Manager Sandy Kaiser.



Nancy is asking this time!

Please let us know if your address has changed, if there are name changes, or if you no longer want to receive the newsletter (although I can't imagine anyone not wanting to receive this wonderful publication.)  
Thank you.





Department of Permitting Services  
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Rockville, Maryland 20850-4166

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